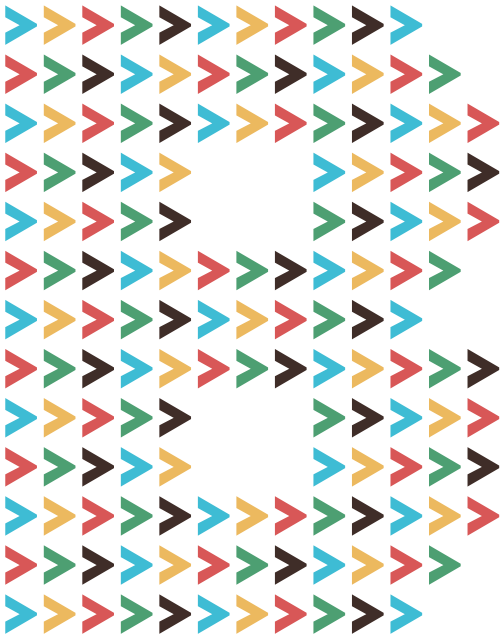


Conference organised by Barcelona City Council

In collaboration with:
International Observatory
on Participatory Democracy
Fabra i Coats | Fàbrica de Creació
Democratic Innovation Laboratory.
C. Sant Adrià, 20, 08030 Barcelona

How to get there:
M L1 (Sant Andreu)
11, 40, 73, 126 y N9
R Sant Andreu Comtal

Further information:
barcelona.cat/participaciociudadana/ca



Local-level citizen consultations

Democracy without mediation

Fabra i Coats
Laboratori d'Innovació Democràtica
Monday, 18 June 2018
9:30 am - 2:45 pm

#DemocràciaDirecta



Local-level citizen consultations

Democracy without mediation

The functioning of the democratic system, particularly that of the representative system, has recently been brought into question by the citizens of Catalonia and Spain, and the need for an expansion of democracy through other, more direct channels, without mediation, has been raised.

Can we talk about a full democratic system without direct-democracy mechanisms? What happens when the citizens exercise their power directly? Is our democracy mature enough to respect public sovereignty? What roles do the different political, social and economic agents take on when direct democracy channels are opened in local governments?

Based on the experiences of the cities of **San Francisco, Krakow, Cajamarca, Olesa de Montserrat, Grenoble, Berlin, Madrid and Barcelona**, that were called on to participate we will try to answer these questions and others.

And citizen participation, when it forms the basis of political decisions, implies a (re)distribution of power and consequently involves conflict, given that it arises from existing urban conflicts.

Opening talk

Direct Democracy - Promises and Challenges

There are various channels for direct democracy around the world, at a local, regional, state and even European level. Referendums and consultations form part of everyday democracy in many areas of the world, such as the United States or Switzerland.

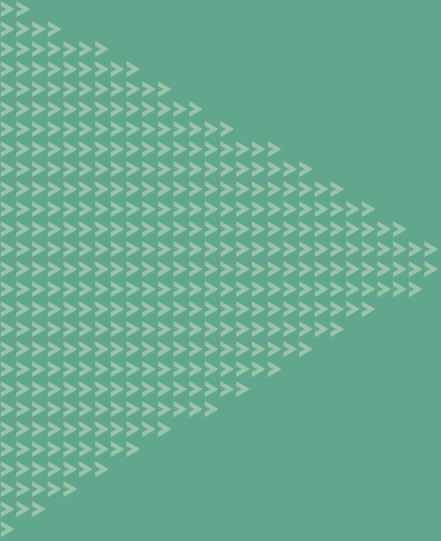
Céline Colombo, a political scientist and researcher at the University of Zurich, will share the studies she has carried out on the mechanisms of all kinds of direct democracy around the world and how they affect the quality of public policies. She will discuss the links and discrepancies between direct and representative democracy, and the roles played by social, political and economic actors in these processes.

9:30 am	Accreditation
9:45 am	Introduction to the conference by Fernando Pindado , commissioner of Participation and Active Democracy of the Barcelona City Council
10:00 am	Inaugural Lecture, "Direct Democracy: Promises and Challenges", by Céline Colombo , political scientist and researcher at the University of Zurich.
10:45 am	Break Breakfast
This will be followed by two discussion tables for local governments to share different experiences on the difficulties and challenges faced when holding citizen consultations.	
11:10 am	The first table, moderated by journalist Ramon Suñé from the <i>La Vanguardia</i> newspaper, will discuss the experiences of consultations launched by the local governments of several cities:
San Francisco , with John Avalos , former San Francisco Supervisor	
Grenoble , with Pierre-Loïc Chambon , Director of Local Democracy	
Olesa de Montserrat , with Pilar Puimedon , Mayor of Olesa de Montserrat	
Madrid , with Pablo Soto , Councillor for Citizen Participation, Transparency and Open Government	
Barcelona , with Gala Pin , Councillor for Participation and Districts.	
Break	
12:40 pm	At the conference's second table, moderated by Jaume Asens , the Third Deputy Mayor at Barcelona City Council, will see the participation of people from all over the world who have launched consultations through citizen initiatives . The table will be made up of the following cities:
Krakow , with Alicja Beryt , a member of Krakow Against Olympics / The Common City, and Deputy Chair of the Ogniwko cooperative.	
Cajamarca , with Renzo Garcia , a biologist and joint founder of the Environmental Committee in Defence of Life and the Network of Environmental Committees of Tollima, Colombia.	
Barcelona , with Quim Pérez , an activist from Ecologists in Action and the Water is Life platform.	
Berlin , with Ulrike Hamann , a doctor and social scientist from Humboldt University of Berlin and founder of the tenants initiative Kotli & Co.	
Closure of the session led by Gala Pin and Jaume Asens	
2:30 pm	End of the conference

Cities with experiences of citizen consultation organised by local governments



Cities with experiences of consultations launched through citizen initiatives



San Francisco

Initiatives in California and San Francisco

John Avalos
Former San Francisco Supervisor,
2009-2017

In San Francisco citizen consultations form part of everyday democracy. The general public can pose questions by means of a citizen initiative. In this case the number of signatures is determined by the percentage of voter turnout in the previous municipal elections.

In 2016 there was an increase in initiatives due to the election turnout having been very low. Only 365,880 signatures were required, whereas normally around half a million are needed. On this occasion more than 16 proposals were submitted for consultation.

Citizen consultations can be tools for the empowerment of citizens as well as for organisation and political guidance. However, there are lessons to be learned on the use of consultations as a mechanism for direct democracy.

The experience of San Francisco forewarns us that they can also be used by economic sectors with the capacity to affect the distribution of votes and on occasion also to promote measures that can endanger human rights by promoting and being anti-democratic.

There are five citizen consultations scheduled in 2018.

Grenoble

Direct Democracy in Grenoble

Pierre-Loic Chambon
Director of local democracy

Since 2014, Grenoble has decided to enrich local democracy with direct democracy mechanisms and has developed its own regulation. Under this regulation, when a citizen initiative is not accepted by the Full Municipal Meeting, it passes directly to the city residents for consultation.

In order for an initiative to be consulted, it must have collected 2,000 signatures and fulfil all the technical requirements established. Anyone over 16 and registered in Grenoble can participate in the city's public consultations.

In March 2016, the initiative on parking charges obtained the required signatures. The proposal was presented and debated by the Municipal Council and the City Council later submitted

it to a vote, from 10 to 15 October 2016. However, the proposal was not approved as it did not obtain the minimum 20,000 votes for it to be adopted by the government, according to the regulation.

At the same time, the French State, despite declaring Grenoble's regulation authentic, on 24 May 2018, this mechanism of direct democracy was declared invalid.

Olesa de Montserrat

The preservation of the Can Llimona plan and the urban-planning qualification of the municipal football fields

Pilar Puimedon Monclús
Mayor of Olesa de Montserrat

At the end of 2013, with the aim of consulting Olesa's residents on three particularly important urban-planning aspects, Olesa City Council began all the procedures established by Law 4/2010, of public consultations via referendum, in order to carry out a consultation in the municipality.

Although the preamble of the law mentions fostering participation and improving democratic quality by implementing mechanisms for participation, when it comes to putting this into practice in the municipality, it is far from easy.

The supra-municipal administrations took 13 months to grant permission for Olesa City Council to ask about issues in play in the municipality. The final permission, moreover, was only granted for consultation on two of the three questions planned. This experience shows that organising a referendum to consult residents on exclusively municipal subjects is neither simple nor a quick administrative process, and that the economic cost is notably increased by the expenses associated with the Electoral Board.

Eventually, on 22 February 2015, the public consultation was held involving a total of 2,954 people, a figure that represents 17% of the electoral roll. Yes won for both questions with more than 90% of the votes.

Madrid

1st Citizen Ballot in Madrid

Pablo Soto Bravo
Government Representative for Citizen Participation, Transparency and Open Government from Madrid City Council

At the end of 2015, and with the new government in the city of Madrid, Decide Madrid, the

new digital platform for citizen participation, was launched. Madrid City Council (as a result of a political agreement not having approved a regulation in the Full Meeting) establishes that anyone over 16 who is registered in the municipality will be able to propose measures, and those that achieve 1% support on the digital platform will be submitted for consultation.

Regarding the aim of the proposals, there is no limit on the formulation, nor must they be of municipal competence.

The first, and currently the only, consultation made by Madrid City Council, was held from 13 to 19 February 2017, in which two questions arising from decide.madrid were put to the vote. "100% sustainable Madrid" (with 89.11% of the votes cast in agreement) and "Single ticket for public transport" (with 93.94% accepting the proposal). At the same consultation questions impelled by the City Council were also asked.

Barcelona

Multi-consultation 2018

Gala Pin
Councillor for Participation at the Barcelona City Council

Last October, the Full Meeting approved the Regulation for citizen participation with a large political consensus. This had not been renewed since 2002, and has meant a strong impetus for citizen participation and the promotion of channels for direct democracy. The Municipal Government announced the intention to carry out a citizen multi-consultation every year with questions formulated by municipal groups, as well as the citizens themselves.

According to the regulation, when the consultation comes from a citizen initiative, the Full Meeting can only reject it if it does not fit with the system of laws and regulations. Even so, municipal groups voted against it (except the ERC) and prevented the holding of the first Multi-consultation in Barcelona, scheduled for June 2018.

One of the initiatives that was asking about the re-municipalisation of water, and which had achieved the minimum of 15,000 signatures, provoked various reactions against it from the economic sectors, who filed more than ten legal appeals, which are still in process.

At the moment the Multi-consultation has been stopped, but the initiatives have presented an appeal for the vote of the Full Meeting of 10 April to be reconsidered.



Krakov

Krakov Winter Olympic Games

Alicja Beryt
Member of Krakow Against Olympics / The Common City, and Vice-president of the Ogniwo cooperative.

In 2012, the authorities in Krakow decided to bid for candidacy for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games. This led to growing opposition to hosting the games, particularly from the initiative "Cracovia Przeciwko Igrzyskom" ("Krakow Against Games"), which after demonstrations and campaigns got the Mayor of Krakow to change his mind and announce that the proposal would be submitted to a referendum.

The announcement of the referendum meant that Krakow City Council subsequently added three more issues for consultation, and that the date would be changed from the initially planned from June to 25 May 2014, so that the referendum would coincide with the European Parliamentary Elections, with the objective of increasing turnout.

The referendum was eventually carried out with four questions, with a turnout of 35.96%, a result that rendered it valid and binding because, according to Polish legislation, a local referendum is considered valid with 30% turnout.

On the question of the games, 69.72% of the votes were in favour of not hosting the Winter Olympic Games.

Cajamarca

Popular Consultation of Piedras and Mega-mining

Renso Alexander García Parra
Biologist and joint founder of the Environmental Committee in Defence of Life and the Network of Environmental Committees of Tolima. Colombia

On 26 March 2017, after more than ten years of debates, hearings, forums, workshops, peaceful demonstrations and episodes of human rights violations, the citizens of the municipality of Cajamarca expressed their absolute rejection of the Colosal mining project and other mining projects in their territory.

On the question: *Do you agree, Yes or No, with the Municipality of Cajamarca carrying out mining projects and activities?* 6,165 people voted no and just 76 voted yes.

The community of Cajamarca was able to exercise its fundamental right to participation and direct decisions to determine its future and the way its territory would develop.

The defence of collective rights to a healthy environment, the agricultural vocation, rural culture and the potential for eco-tourism won the day.

Barcelona

Let's re-municipalise Barcelona's water

Quim Pérez i Gómez
Activist from Ecologists in Action and Water is Life.

The "Let's re-municipalise Barcelona's water" campaign overcame the great challenge of obtaining over 15,000 signatures required by Barcelona City Council to organise a citizen consultation with the aim of asking, everyone registered in the city and over 16 years of age, about how water is managed.

More than 40 Barcelona entities and over 100 individuals decided to go out into the streets, squares, markets and other corners of the city to get the necessary support to submit a consultation on whether water management should be public and with citizen participation. In just two and a half months they got 26,389 signatures.

This was the first citizen initiative, along with the initiative about the change of name for Plaça Antonio López, which, under the new Citizen Participation Regulation, was able to bring a question for citizen consideration to the Full Municipal Meeting Session of April 10 2018 .

Despite these efforts, the opposition groups overturned the two initiatives and voted against holding the consultation, violating the regulation that the same Full Meeting had approved six months earlier.

Berlin

Referendum on renting, re-municipalisation and referendum on the compulsory acquisition of large housing companies

Ulrike Hamann
Doctor and social scientist from Humboldt University of Berlin and founder of the tenants initiative Kotti & Co.

In Berlin, where house prices are still lower than in other European capitals, investors from around the world are buying buildings for property speculation.

A group of activists is proposing a consultation to transfer privately-owned rental apartments to public ownership. Specifically, the initiative proposes to submit to a referendum the compulsory acquisition of Deutsche Wohnen, one of the most powerful German property companies, to allocate its properties for public rental.

If a referendum like this goes ahead, the Berlin Senate will be faced with a separation similar to that which arose after the re-municipalisation of water: the State would have to buy these homes from the property company.

The Kotti & Co protest calls on Berlin to become a democratic city. A city where everyone can pay, where the cost of housing is reasonable, and which does not become a ghetto for the rich.